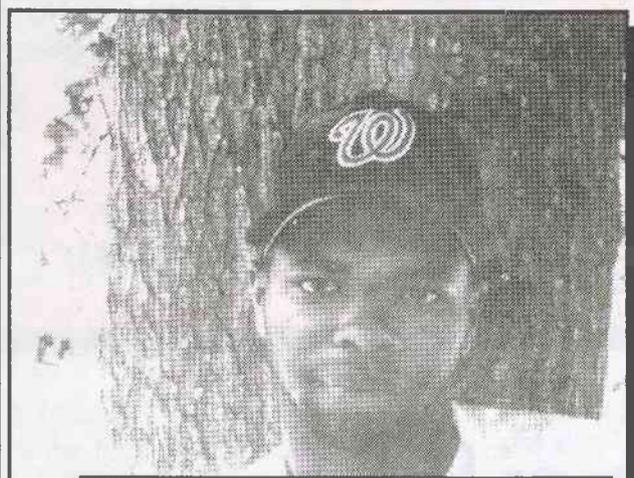
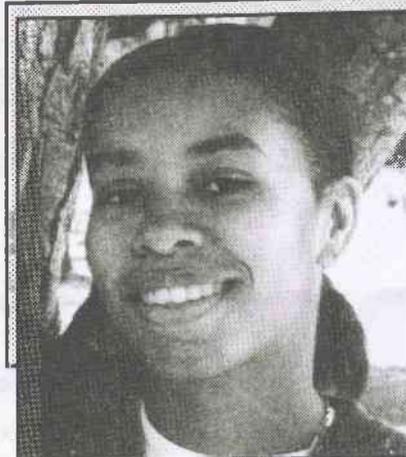


Talk of ECSU: Is the Commuter Center fulfilling its purpose?



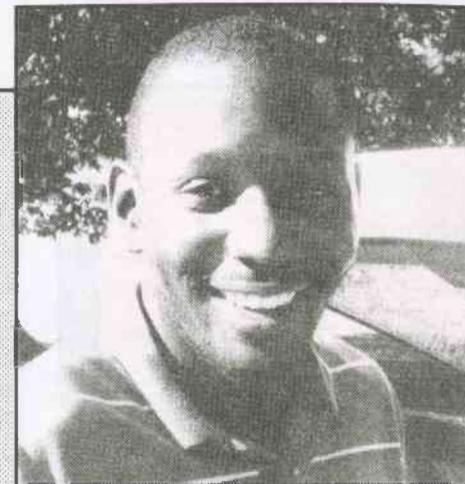
Walter Martin, Junior
Fayetteville, N.C.

Yes, because it has the facilities we want—video games, bowling alley, drinks, snacks and TV.



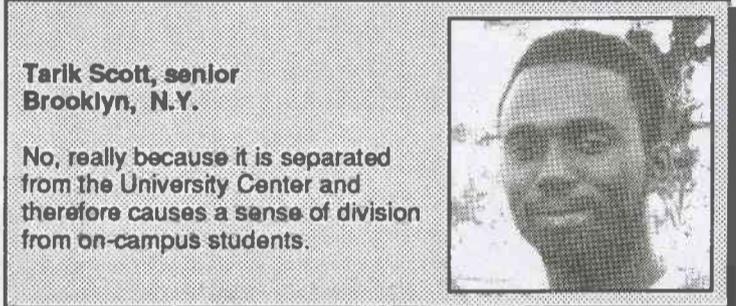
Chelsea Raynor, sophomore
Hamilton, N.C.

Yes, because wherever I go commuters are making good use of it.



Jody Riddick, senior
Ahoskie, N.C.

Yes, because it's a good place for commuters to go between classes to study or relax.



Tarik Scott, senior
Brooklyn, N.Y.

No, really because it is separated from the University Center and therefore causes a sense of division from on-campus students.

GUEST COLUMN

How many more people have to die before the government bans guns?

By Lavenia Dameron

On weekends in the small farming community of Windsor, N.C. shots ring out in the night.

A 25-year-old man is shot in the head by his girlfriend. She is not arrested because she says she shot him self-defense.

Two weeks before that, a crowd scatters from the parking lot of a local night club when shots are fired. Two teenagers lie dead—both murdered by a 16-year old with a semi-automatic handgun.

A few months later, a man shoots and kills three people in the town's Be-Low grocery store. And a teenager kidnaps a young man and his pregnant sister from Virginia, and shoots the man dead when he tries to escape.

Windsor is a small town in Bertie County, in Northeastern, N.C. In this small town everyone knows their neighbor, and many people are related to each other. The town has a courthouse, several banks, gas stations, drug stores and a Hardees. It sounds peaceful but it's not. The headlines on the front page of the Bertie Ledger-Star tell the horrifying sto-

ries of deaths by firearm.

Many residents of Windsor would have never thought gun control would be necessary in their small town.

"That New Yawk City is a terrible place," the townsfolk would always say. "We're lucky to be living in our small town."

Many residents who have left Windsor for other places have since returned, hoping to escape the ills and violence of more urban areas. What they have found out, however, is that no one is safe anywhere anymore.

And people will continue living in fear for their lives as long as the government allows the sale of handguns to its citizens.

The national controversy over gun control is becoming an increasingly hot issue in the media. Gun ownership advocates say, "Guns don't kill, people do."

That, however, is a ridiculous statement. Have any of these people realize that if guns weren't so easy to get, then maybe people wouldn't be so quick to shoot?

Today, it's just as easy to buy a gun off the street as it is to buy groceries from a store. Almost every teenage boy at Bertie

High School carries a gun or knows someone who does. Teenagers carry guns to gain respect from their peers, to prove they are tough, and to protect themselves from others who may be threatening them with guns.

This problem is not limited to Bertie High; it is national in scope. In some schools, students are screened before they enter with metal detectors. And some school systems have set up special programs to encourage students to tell a teacher, counselor or principal if they know of someone with a gun on school property.

Under the new Brady Bill, citizens will have to wait five days before receiving a permit to purchase a gun. Many people agree with this new law; others say it intrudes on their rights. The bottom line issue, however, is that the Brady bill is going to have very little effect on the easy availability of handguns to young people. A handgun can still be purchased at any street corner by town thugs.

Why? Because of the millions of handguns already in circulation, and the hundreds of thousands more sold annually

in the U.S. Many of these guns will end up being stolen from law-abiding citizens who purchased them to protect themselves from crime. A Norfolk homicide detective recently testified that many of the guns confiscated on the street were legally purchased firearms that had been stolen from their owners' cars.

There is only one solution to this problem. The government should enact—and enforce—tougher laws to prevent the sale of guns on the streets. Handguns should not be permitted to average citizens. Anyone convicted of using guns, selling them or buying them illegally, should be given a long prison sentence.

If guns weren't so accessible to people who misuse them, ordinary American citizens wouldn't be able to justify owning a gun for "self-protection."

Someone is murdered with a handgun every hour. Thousands of men, women and children have already died because of the easy availability of handguns in our society. How many more have to die before we decide to get rid of them?

The choice is ours to make. All that it requires is the will and courage to act.